

PARISHES 'ADOPT' 1,500 JAIL INMATES

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Brooklyn Prisoners Aided in 2 Programs—'Moral Bail' Offered by Union

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By MARTIN TOLCHIN

Thirty church parishes have "adopted" the 1,500 prisoners in the Brooklyn House of Detention for Men and a union has offered to stand "moral bail" for members accused of crimes in two new projects that involve the community in the lives of prisoners.

"The only way to salvage the prison system is to bring the community in," William J. vanden Heuvel, chairman of the Board of Correction, told editors and reporters of The New York Times yesterday at a luncheon meeting.

"We want to get every cellblock in every prison adopted by a parish," he added.

Weekly Visits by Clergy

Each parish provides at least one clergyman who comes in at least once a week to help prisoners in each of the jail's 24 cellblocks (four on each of six floors) to deal with family problems, obtain counseling, therapy, jobs and personal necessities.

"They're not concerned with the internal operation of the prison," said Correction Commissioner George F. McGrath, "but with the personal problems of the inmates."

The Rev. John M. Corn of Trinity Parish, Manhattan, who helped organize the experimental project, which began last month, said:

"We as clergy have raised a lot of Cain about Attica. We think we're partially responsible for the state of affairs because of public apathy and clergy apathy, and we

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think we ought to do something about it."

He defined the program as "assisting inmates in finding somebody from the community who cares about them, and enable them to communicate their frustrations to the outside."

Of the 30 parishes, 20 are Protestant and 10 are Roman Catholic. Asked about the absence of Jewish participation, Jeffrey Siger, special counsel to the board, said that although several rabbis had appeared at the organizing session last August, "you don't have very many Jewish people in prisons."

"The people most concerned are those whose parish members are in prison," he added.

He said that the participating parishes were mostly in Manhattan, but included parishes in Brooklyn, Queens and Scarsdale.

Involvement by Union

Another program of community involvement, to have a union stand "moral bail" for its members and their dependents, has been advanced by Local 1199 of the Drug and Hospital Union, whose 50,000 members serve in voluntary hospitals and retail drugstores.

The program, which has been approved by the five District Attorneys, awaits the approval of Justice David Ross, the administrative judge of the Criminal Court.

"Our members don't always know their way around in many areas," said Leon Davis, the union president.

"In the courts, they are completely lost about their rights, and legal representation," he said. "We feel that this is one of the services we ought to provide—to make sure that he appears in court, and provide guidance and therapy."

David S. Worgan, executive assistant district attorney in New York County, confirmed that the five District Attorneys had approved the plan, although moral bail would not be automatic.

"We welcome the union's superior knowledge about a man, and their ability to secure his appearance," he said.

Irving Lang, Supervising Judge of the Criminal Court,



The New York Times

William vanden Heuvel

said that he had met yesterday with Mr. Davis and Mr. vanden Heuvel and their aides to discuss the project.

"One of the elements that judges look for is a person's roots in the community, and our ability to verify that gives added impetus for a judge to make a sound decision," Judge Lang said.

Judge Sees Courts Aided

He added that the nature of the charge and the defendant's criminal record also would be taken into consideration. Judge Lang said that he was drafting a proposal for Justice Ross's consideration.

Mr. vanden Heuvel told the luncheon meeting that community involvement was only one of the measures needed to reform the prisons.

"Get rid of the cages," he urged. "Most people do not need maximum security."

Mr. vanden Heuvel said that

10 to 20 per cent of the prisoners had psychiatric problems, and belonged in psychiatric institutions. Ten per cent required maximum security, he said.

The remainder, he went on, should be placed in institutions such as the state's unused narcotics centers—closed for lack of funds—in which inmates roamed the wards.

Consolidated Records Urged

Mr. vanden Heuvel also cited the urgent need for "pulling file together," and told, with emotion, of the suicide in the Tombs last Sunday of a 22-year-old prisoner who had been previously arrested eleven times, and had attempted suicide during several previous incarcerations.

Because of the lack of records, his psychiatric condition was unknown to the guards, despite the fact that he had written on the wall of his cell, "Michael Carter will die here Dec. 23d."

Mr. vanden Heuvel also addressed himself to a number of

other subjects, including:

¶On the Transportation Bond Issue—"I haven't met a single important politician who thinks it's going to pass."

¶On what's ahead for the '70 — "The state will have to assume responsibilities for financing public education, and there will be a major increase in Federal money for welfare and mass transit."

¶On skepticism — "There's a major credibility gap between people and government. It's partially justified. This is the third bond issue to provide funds for the 2d Avenue subway."

¶On the city's investigation of the state's operations, which he heads — "I was really surprised by the lack of productive communication between governments. Part of it is personal, but part of it is structural."

¶On Lindsay — "He's the second major Republican to become a Democrat. The first was Nixon — On China policy and wage-price controls."

¶On Attica — "The failures

came in the negotiation procedures. Men like [William] Kunstler and [Bobby] Seale had to be advocates of the prisoners, and successful negotiators can't be advocates."

¶On uprisings in the city prisons — "Our policy is to move in immediately to confine — limit the scope of the — balance with the force without firearms."

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